

## District Council Report

### **Virtual High Street**

Over 100 new businesses have signed up to the Virtual High Street as the site launches in Hadleigh and Stowmarket, joining over 130 already signed up to the platform in Sudbury. This allows shoppers to shop local at a range of high street stores, independent retailers, and market stalls, as well as cafes and restaurants. Customers will be able to visit their local shops online to browse stock, place orders and arrange click and collect or a delivery from home or on the move.

The aim of the Virtual High Street is to bring the local high street and market stalls into the homes of customers before they visit the high street in person, making shopping local and supporting local businesses even easier.

For residents in Hadleigh, over 55 businesses including Ferguson's Delicatessen, Cobbler Café and Wine Bar, Andrew's Quality Butchers and EriVica Cakes are all signed up as well as accommodation providers such as Holbeck House B&B and The Gables B&B.

### **Joint Local Plan Examination**

It is anticipated that the Stage 1 hearings sessions scheduled for June and July will now take place over a concentrated period from September and it is envisaged that the Stage 2 hearing sessions will continue to be able to take place in mid-Autumn as originally planned.

Appropriate notice will be provided to all who made a representation to the Regulation 19 consultation, so they can participate in the hearings.

Further information for anyone who wishes to follow the proceedings will be published on the councils' dedicated Joint Local Plan examination webpage nearer the time.

The change of dates does not alter the status of the Joint Local Plan regarding weight in the planning decision making process.

### **Belle Vue Park entrance on the agenda**

The future of Belle Vue park in Sudbury is on the Agenda for both Cabinet and Full Council this month. Earlier this year the Cabinet accepted a bid to turn the house and swimming pool area into homes for retirement living. The bid will give the Council £1.2M for the park entrance.

This project is not only hugely controversial in Sudbury, but the Council will need to borrow the £1.2M to build the park entrance before the new properties even have planning permission. There is a concern that this could leave us in debt if planning permission is refused.

## **Hadleigh Workspaces**

Businesses in Babergh could benefit from new workspaces at a key location in Hadleigh following a decision from Babergh District Council to progress the development of 1.5 acres of allocated employment land.

Situated on the A1071 at Hadleigh, the land could support a convenience retail unit and approximately 10 light industrial or workspace units for a range of uses including by micro and start-up businesses.

It is hoped that this employment site could create almost 50 full time jobs as well as opportunities for young people and apprentices, providing a boost to the local economy post Covid.

## **Locality Award Fund**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' have again made money available for Locality Awards funding – enabling communities to improve facilities, learn new skills and work towards becoming environmentally sustainable.

Babergh have provided each Councillor with £2000 to support the villages in their wards.

The Locality Awards grants can be used towards combating loneliness in communities by installing hearing loops, providing Wi-Fi in rural areas, or hosting coffee mornings or lunch clubs.

Groups can also apply for funding for sports and play equipment, exercise classes, walking festivals and other initiatives which support the councils' aim for communities to lead active lives and manage their own health and wellbeing.

Applications are also welcome for providing medical skills such as first aid to communities, as well as supporting them in other training including safeguarding, fire safety and anti-social behaviour prevention.

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